

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MICHAEL STASSINOPOULOS ELECTED PROVISIONAL
PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC

1. SUMMARY. EX-PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF STATE MICHAEL STASSINOPOULOS WAS ELECTED BY PARLIAMENT IN SECRET BALLOT ON DECEMBER 18 AS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC OF GREECE. OPPOSITION LEADERS DECLARED UNITED POSITION AGAINST GOG PROCEDURE IN SELECTING CANDIDATE WITHOUT CONSULTATION AND AGAINST SWIFTNESS OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTE. STASSINOPOULOS WAS SWORN IN AT 1300 HOURS IN TRADITIONAL CEREMONY BY ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM IN PRESENCE OF OFFICIALS, MILITARY LEADERS AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS. END SUMMARY.

2. PARLIAMENT MET 1030 HOURS DECEMBER 18 AND AFTER ROUND OF REMARKS BY PM CARAMANLIS, GEORGE MAVROS, CU/NF, ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, PASOK, AND LEONIDAS KYRKOS, KKE (INTERIOR), GOG CANDIDATE MICHAEL STASSINOPOULOS WAS ELECTED PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC. FOLLOWING SECRET BALLOTING (206 TO 74 WITH 8 BLANK AND 3 VOID BALLOTS FROM 291 DEPUTIES PRESENT) PARLIAMENT ADJOURNED FOR FEW MINUTES TO RECONVENE AT 1300 HOURS TO WITNESS SWEARING IN OF NATION'S PROVISION PRESIDENT. PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION CENTERED ON GOG PROCEDURE OR QUICK ANNOUNCEMENT OF CANDIDATE, WHICH OPPOSITION LEADERS
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CHALLENGED ON BASIS THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED THUS EXCLUDING

POSSIBILITY OF "COMMON CANDIDATE", AND CALL FOR VOTE FOLLOWING DAY. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF STASSINOPOULOS' PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS AS HAD BEEN AGREED UPON IN PARLIAMENT PREVIOUS DAY. MAVROS, PAPANDREOU AND KYRKOS EXPLAINED THAT THEIR NEGATIVE VOTE WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST STASSINOPOULOS AS INDIVIDUAL BUT THAT THEY OPPOSED FACT THAT CANDIDATE REPRESENTED POLITICAL PARTY. PM CARAMANLIS LATER CONFIRMED THAT STASSINOPOULOS AT HIS OWN REQUEST WOULD RESIGN SEAT IN PARLIAMENT THUS OPENING DEPUTY-AT-LARGE POSITION ON NEW DEMOCRACY SLATE WHICH COULD GO TO JOHN TSOUDEROS.

3. POWERS OF PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT ARE DEFINED IN DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT DECEMBER 17 AND WHICH PM CARAMANLIS REQUESTED DEPUTIES TO ACT UPON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20. BY OCTOBER 4, 1974 CONSTITUENT ACT PROVISIONAL PRESIDENTS TENURE COMES TO END WHEN NEW CONSTITUTION IS APPROVED AND PERMANENT PRESIDENT IS ELECTED. STASSINOPOULOS WILL PERFORM MOST OF THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO KING BY 1952 CONSTITUTION, BUT REPORTEDLY WILL NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO DISMISS PARLIAMENT OR CALL FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE. SEPARATE DECREE WILL DETERMINE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, FUNDING, AND ORGANIZATION OF PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.

4. THE SEVENTY-ONE YEAR OLD PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT IS A DISTINGUISHED LAWYER WHO HAS AN ASSOCIATION WITH GREECE'S COUNCIL OF STATE - THE HIGHEST COURT FOR ADJUDICATING ADMINISTRATIVE LAW AND CITIZEN'S COMPLAINTS - GOING BACK TO 1929 WHEN HE BEGAN AS A LAW CLERK. IN 1965 HE BECAME COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND IN 1969, AFTER HAVING ABROGATED A JUNTA LEGISLATIVE DECREE WHICH PURGED A NUMBER OF JUDGES, HE WAS HIMSELF DISMISSED FROM THE COUNCIL. A LITERARY MAN AND MEMBER OF THE GREEK ACADEMY, HE SPENT RECENT YEARS TRANSLATING FRENCH POETS AND WRITING HIS OWN POETRY. HE HOLDS FULL LAW PROFESSORSHIPS AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY AND THEPANTIOS SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS A DAUGHTER. SPEAKS FRENCH, GERMAN, ENGLISH. THE HIGH REGARD WHICH CARAMANLIS HOLDS FOR HIM WAS AFFIRMED IN HIS PLACEMENT AT THE TOP OF THE SLATE OF TWELVE NOMINEES FOR NATIONAL DEPUTY FOR THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY AS WITH HIS PRESENT NOMINATION AND ELECTION

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AS PRESIDENT.
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